

Appendix N.

Letter from Secretary Helene Nelson, DHFS



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

May 9, 2005

Stan Stojkovic, Ph.D.
Enderis Hall, Room 1099
PO Box 786
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Dear Dr. Stojkovic:

Thank you for your recent letter to Governor Jim Doyle, Secretaries Mark Marotta, Matt Frank and myself, regarding the activities of the Sexually Violent Persons Transitional Facility Siting Advisory Committee. The work you and the committee have done to date has been challenging. On behalf of Governor Doyle, I want to personally thank you and each member of the committee for your dedication in helping to resolve this difficult matter for Milwaukee County.

The Department of Health and Family Services will continue to provide the committee with any needed support and resources required to assist in the siting of a transitional facility for sexually violent persons on supervised release.

As you know, the Department has provided the committee, as directed by Act 187, with support staff for each meeting. Steve Watters, Director at Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Facility and Deb McCulloch, Community and Treatment Support Director, have also been available to the committee as a valuable resource. Steve and Deb have been able to assist the committee in understanding the history and complications of the supervised release program in Milwaukee County. Steve and Deb are truly the state's experts on the supervised release program.

In addition to staff support, the Department solicited over 40 Milwaukee County realtors, builders and developers to assist the committee in its search for viable land to build a transitional facility. As you know, the initial RFP received one reply. Department staff made several follow up phone calls to encourage participation in the process. Unfortunately, there were no additional bids submitted, and the original bidder removed his property from consideration days before the public hearing.

Dr. Stan Stojkovic

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The Department also contacted the Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources for assistance. Although both Departments employ land purchasing agents, the fact is that transportation officials focus on the purchase of land for the construction of roadways and DNR officials focus on the purchase of uninhabited land. Neither the DOT nor DNR have personnel with the necessary experience to purchase land for the construction of a transitional facility for sexually violent persons in an urban setting such as Milwaukee County. State agencies typically contract with local real-estate brokers when purchasing property for the purposes of constructing a facility.

I encourage the committee to continue in its efforts to identify at least three possible sites for a transitional facility that are acceptable to the community. I will ensure the committee has the necessary support to meet its charge. To that end, I will direct Department staff to rethink the process for soliciting Milwaukee County real-estate brokers in an effort to maximize positive replies.

Once again, I want to thank you and the committee for your dedication to help resolve a very challenging problem facing Milwaukee County.

Most sincerely,



Helene Nelson
Secretary

cc: Governor Jim Doyle
Secretary Mark Marotta
Secretary Matt Frank